

**Corky Ullom** (GA) sent this report about his August 2009 hunt in Azerbaijan and southern Russia:

*I was absolutely stunned when my name was called for the first 3/4 Slam drawing in 2000. Since then I have been quite busy feeding my sheep and goat addiction. I started with the Altay argali, and followed that up with Gobi argali in Mongolia, Transcaspian urial in Turkmenistan, Chinese blue sheep, mouflon in Spain, Marco Polo in Tajikistan, aoudad in New Mexico, and finished up in August 2009 with the Dagestan (Eastern) tur in Azerbaijan. Additionally, on the same hunt I added the mid-Caucasian tur in Russia for lucky #13. I would rate the tur hunts as the most challenging mentally and physically, next to the Marco Polo. It's no surprise that only approximately 20 hunters have ever completed the "Tur Slam." I plan to be one of them next year with the Kuban (Western) tur in Russia.*

*My Dagestan (Eastern) tur hunt, booked through ProfiHunt, found me hunting with two great guides. Taleh and Tural are brothers who live and breathe tur hunting. They were assisted by their leader and father Gahangik, as well as Zavor, and cook Adil. They all would rather be in the mountains than at home.*

*I arrived in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, via Frankfurt from my home in Atlanta, Georgia. After a night's stay-over, I departed for Sheki a 3 1/2-hour easy car ride north near the Russian border. The following day I met my crew*

*and we started a horseback ride into the beautiful Caucasus Mountains. Before the steep climb I sighted in my 7mm Remington Magnum and proceeded for the next three hours up the mountains to our base camp at about 8,000 feet. Weather was very warm and clear. On our ascent I saw numerous Caucasian chamois curiously looking at us from this elevation, seemingly not afraid of the sight of humans. Upon inquiry I was surprised to find that you could not hunt these mountain goats in Azerbaijan. This would soon change, but more about that later.*

*At base camp I was informed we would begin our ascent of the mountain in front of me in the morning. Quite honestly, looking up at the jagged cliffs rising over 12,000 feet gave me pause, but as always I convinced myself it was just one step at a time to the top.*

*We broke camp mid-morning and started the four-hour climb. It was quite treacherous. One of my guides always stayed close in case of a misstep. After a grueling sweat-soaked climb, Tural thought he spotted a group of rams at the very top. Oh, boy! Higher we went. As we crested the summit at 12,500 feet, there was a vast bowl separating Russia from Azerbaijan. In it were 50-60 Dagestan tur. We glassed them carefully and decided on a big*

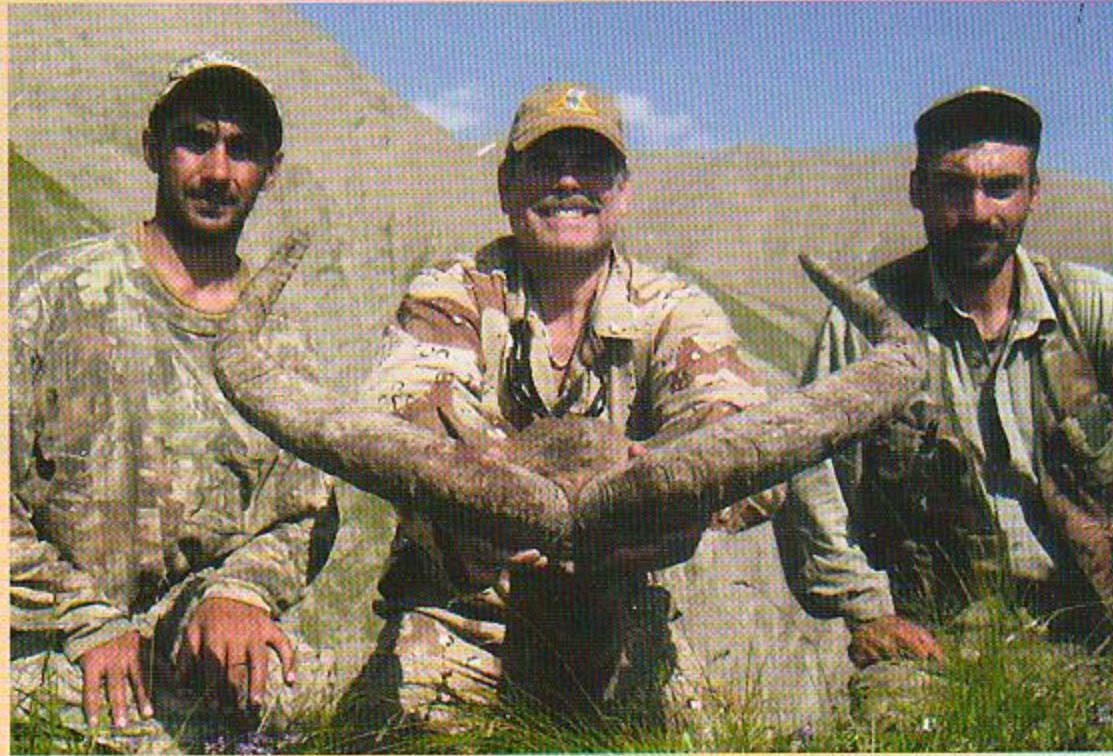
*ram in the middle. As they grazed toward us, I ticked off the yardage. 450, 420, 390 370, and was about to pull the trigger when Tural's brother Taleh (who thank God spoke English), tapped me vigorously on the shoulder and said, "STOP!" Way in the back was a very big tur that looked like he had a set of very thick Harley Davidson ape hanger handle bars on his head. Naturally, he was the furthest away. I ranged him at over 500 yards. When he got within 450 yards I took what in hindsight was probably not a good percentage shot. At the crack of the rifle, the big guy buckled, righted himself and headed right toward us. Though moving quickly I could see that he was hit high on the shoulder and was not moving as fast as the others for the canyon below us. As he approached the edge of a canyon I gave him*

*another round and he tumbled head over heels out of sight, into one of the most jagged, steep, canyons I had ever seen. As I arose to make the hike down into the ravine, Taleh, Zavor, and Tural insisted I stay topside. Even after arguing with them vigorously, they insisted I stay because of the danger of the descent and subsequent climb back to the top. Taleh even went so far as to show me a long scar on his leg he attributed to just this canyon. I decided to accept their advice, and live to hunt again. Upon retrieval of my fine trophy, I was pleased with his mass and length in excess of 40". He looked to be about 10 years old.*

*I wanted a full body mount but*

*the cape was so demolished from the fall I decided a shoulder mount would have to do. (Before I left for mid-Caucasian tur in Russia, I met the director of wildlife for northern Azerbaijan. We became immediate friends and agreed to stay in touch for future hunts.)*

*I arrived in Moscow the next day and met up with one of my favorite guides, **Alexey Maximov**. This hunt was also booked through ProfiHunt. After a night's stay in Moscow we flew to the mineral spring resort area of Mineral Nyje Vody in the southern Caucasus Mountains and proceeded out to our base camp, about a two-hour drive. We immediately packed horses, and headed to our base of operations half way up the mountain. There Alexey and I got acquainted with two local guides: typical lean, mean, human goats that could walk up any mountain anywhere. The first day we hunted in the low areas, hoping to ambush a big tur coming out of the trees to feed. No such luck. After a good meal back at camp it was decided because of the warm weather we would have to go to the top of the mountain. These mid-Caucasus mountains were just as treacherous as the ones in Azerbaijan. That night it was humorous to see six grown men and one young boy all in one huge bed filled with hay. You couldn't turn over without*



Corky Ullom (GA, center) took this Dagestan (Eastern) tur from Azerbaijan in August 2009. Corky was hunting with ProfiHunt.

whacking someone in the face. Still, I rested peacefully and awoke energized and ready to go.

After reaching the very summit of the mountain, which ranged around 11,000 feet, we looked into a shallow basin that had a large spire of rock rising up right in the middle. Perched on this huge rock was a very old and heavy-horned tur sound asleep. Slightly below were a female and two young tur. The wait was now on. I ranged him at a very comfortable range of 275 yards. Thirty minutes later he still was in dreamland. We began to notice a very large fog bank forming at the lower elevation starting to move up the mountain. This was bad news. In just a few minutes it would totally obscure this tur, and possibly doom the opportunity to take him. It was decided that one of the local guides would throw rocks down the mountain to wake him from his sleep. I would have to be ready for a snap shot, for once he rose he could step out of sight with just a couple of steps. I readied myself for the first rock... nothing. The second rock... nothing. Finally they tossed a rock the size of a bowling ball. When it hit, he stood up and instantly I fired. He disappeared and when he next appeared he was making his way up the far side of the mountain, but stumbling. How could he still be on his feet, let alone going uphill? I was sure I had to have hit him hard. I took a second Texas heart shot at about 350 yards, and missed just right. Then this tough animal did a most unusual thing. He hid head first between two huge boulders with only his butt showing. I could see blood pumping out of him on the boulder to his right. I waited for him to move, which he did with a death throes back flip back down the mountain. When we finally



This mid-Caucasian tur was taken by Corky Ullom (GA) in Russia, August 2009.

reached him he was a very heavy 11-year-old ram. My first shot had been a perfect lung shot with both an entry and exit wound. God, what a tough animal, to have gone so far up the mountain before succumbing to the 160-grain Nosler partition bullet.

As we skinned him for a full body mount the fog really moved in, creating a virtual whiteout. Once done, we packed out hide, horns and meat for the hike back. Honestly it was a very difficult trip. Heavy fog persistently obscured our vision and a light mist made the rocks extremely slippery. A sturdy walking stick is the only thing that saved me

from certain injury as I slid and stumbled down the mountain. Back in town, Alexey took me to a private hunting lodge where I had a fabulous meal and good night's sleep. One stop in Moscow and I was back in my own bed the next day in Marietta, Georgia.

There is more to Corky's story elsewhere in this issue of *OVIS*, where he returned to Azerbaijan in November to hunt Caucasian chamois and bezoar ibex. Some of you may be saying, "You can't hunt those two animals in Azerbaijan!" But you'll have to read the rest of Corky's story to understand what happened.